

Age, tough terrain no obstacle for Ku Li
Malaysiakini.com
October 29, 2010

The wet and slippery dirt road into the interior made travel difficult, even in four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Age was also not on the side of the 73-year-old BN election director for the Galas state by-election.

But Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah had only one thing on his mind yesterday - to meet the Orang Asli community in two settlements, even if it were to take him all day to do so.

He accomplished the mission, spending almost 12 hours from 8.30am!

Some of the vehicles in the convoy got caught, at times, in the slush dirt road leading to Pos Balar, some 90km and four hours inland, and then on to Pos Hau, another four hours away.

Tengku Razaleigh, who is highly regarded by the Orang Asli in Gua Musang, spoke to the more than 100 Orang Asli in Pos Balar, assuring them that the BN federal government had not marginalised them from mainstream development.

"The federal government has provided various basic infrastructure, such as clinics and schools, and an allocation of RM10.8 million for the development of the Orang Asli in Gua Musang," he told the residents.

He said he would negotiate with the PAS government of Kelantan to give land to the Orang Asli for use as housing sites, burial ground and farmland so that they have property to pass on to their future generations.

"The 'ladang rakyat' apparently implemented for the benefit of the Orang Asli is nonsense because they become mere coolies when what they want is their own land," he said.

Tengku Razaleigh, popularly known as Ku Li, spent about an hour meeting the people of Pos Balar and then moved on to Pos Hau, by road for another four hours, to meet about 200 people.

Speaking to reporters later, he said the Orang Asli community raised questions with him, many regarding land.

"They want to own land and want to retain their reserve land without exploitation by anyone. They have lost much farmland and hunting ground, forcing them to lose their source of livelihood," he said, adding that he would raise the matter with the state government.

The Galas state constituency has 1,889 Orang Asli voters in five settlements - Pos Balar, Pos Hendrop, Pos Bihai, Pos Hau and Pos Brooke.

The by-election on Nov 4 is a straight fight between Abdul Aziz Yusoff of the BN and Dr Zulkefli Mohamad of PAS. It has been necessitated by the death of the assemblyperson, Che Hashim Sulaima, 46, of PAS, on Sept 27.

- Bernama

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/146763>